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- Eugene Vaysberg
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Senior farewell

The UR International Theatre Program wishes to thank and wish godspeed to the following graduating seniors (and Take 5 scholars) who have contributed to theatre and to the Theatre Program over the course of their undergraduate careers:
This production has been made possible through the combined efforts of
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This season is supported by pledges, gifts and donations from the following generous alumni and friends:
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the university of rochester international theatre program presents

king lear
by william shakespeare

directed & set design by nigel maister
costume design by jessica gaffney
lighting design by thomas dunn
sound design & original score by obadiah eaves
voice and acting coaching by ruth childs

production staff

production stage manager...........................................emily pye
assistant production stage manager.............................stefania ianno
assistant stage managers.........................................tonie phillips/costumes
.........................................................................................brian lobenstein/lights
.........................................................................................montoia davis/sound
.........................................................................................kristine wadosky/props
master electrician.........................................................julia cosse
assistant master electrician...........................................mike levine
audiovisual engineer......................................................emily erdman
assistant audiovisual engineer.....................................michael minnick
assistant to the set designer........................................carlotta gambato
assistant directors......................................................anna kroup & laura miguel
production dramaturg..................................................kenneth gross
costume stitcher.............................................................irena kuvizic

This production runs two hours and forty-five minutes with one 15 minute intermission
please remember to switch off all cellphones and electronic devices

Please Note
theatrical gunshots are used in this production
1582: Married Anne Hathaway.
1585: Birth of twins, Judith and Hamnet.
1585: Married Anne Hathaway.
1587: Birth of a daughter, Susanna.
1587: Shakespeare begins to write his first plays.
1593: Shakespeare begins to write close to 15,000.
1594: Shakespeare joins the acting troupe, the Lord Chamberlain's Men.
1595: Shakespeare writes King Lear, Timon of Athens, and The Two Noble Kinsmen.
1596: Shakespeare writes Much Ado About Nothing.
1599: The Globe Theatre is built on Bankside, Southwark, London.
1600: Hamlet
1601-1602: Twelfth Night, All's Well That Ends Well, and Troilus and Cressida
1602: An epidemic of the Black Death (bubonic plague) kills at least 33,000 in London. Queen Elizabeth I dies and James VI of Scotland becomes James I of England and Ireland.
1605: Shakespeare writes Romeo and Juliet and Henry V.
1607-1608: Timon of Athens, Pericles and Coriolanus.
1610-1611: The Winter's Tale, The Tempest, King Lear, III, ii
1612: The oldest hath borne most: we that are young, Shall never see so much, nor live so long."
Edgar, King Lear, V, iii
1613: The Globe theatre burns to the ground.
1614: The Globe theatre reopens.
1615: The Merchant of Venice.
1616: Shakespeare dies and is buried at Holy Trinity Church, Stratford. His death may have been caused by typhus, a disease commonly contract-
1616: April 23: Shakespeare dies and is buried at Holy Trinity Church, Stratford. His death may have been caused by typhus, a disease commonly contracted that year. He was 52 and, in the context of the time, an old man. The average lifespan in 17th century England was 35.
1616: April 23: Shakespeare dies and is buried at Holy Trinity Church, Stratford. His death may have been caused by typhus, a disease commonly contracted that year. He was 52 and, in the context of the time, an old man. The average lifespan in 17th century England was 35.
1616: Shakespeare writes Othello.
1621: Shakespeare's works are published in the First Folio.
1633: Shakespeare's works are published in the Second Folio.
1641: Shakespeare's works are published in the Third Folio.
1660: Shakespeare's works are published in the Fourth Folio.
1674: Shakespeare's works are published in the Fifth Folio.
1709: Shakespeare's works are published in the First Quarto.
1755: Shakespeare's works are published in the Second Quarto.
1808: Shakespeare's works are published in the Third Quarto.
1821: Shakespeare's works are published in the Fourth Quarto.
1841: Shakespeare's works are published in the Fifth Quarto.
1867: Shakespeare's works are published in the Sixth Quarto.
1921: Shakespeare's works are published in the Seventeenth Quarto.
1936: Shakespeare's works are published in the Eighteenth Quarto.
1953: Shakespeare's works are published in the Nineteenth Quarto.
1967: Shakespeare's works are published in the Twentieth Quarto.
1981: Shakespeare's works are published in the Twenty-first Quarto.
1999: Shakespeare's works are published in the Twenty-second Quarto.
Gloucester, King Lear, I, ii

Machinations, hollowness, treachery and all ruinous disorders follow us disquietly to our graves. We have seen the best of our time.

KING LEAR
Jonny Stulberg
GONERIL (Lear's eldest daughter)
Taryn Kimel
REGAN (Lear’s second daughter)
Holly Culbreath
EDGAR (Gloucester's elder son)
Jonathan Wetherbee
CURRUAN (Gloucester's servant)
Menashe Miller
DUKE OF CORNWALL
Phillip Witte
EARL OF KENT
Cassie Dobbins
LEAR'S GENTLEMAN
Phillip Witte
KING OF FRANCE
Matt Munderville
CAPT AIN & SOLDIER
Mark Patch
KING LEAR (married to Goneril)
Jeremy Sliwoski
EARL OF GLoucester
Nicholas Wrem
EDGAR (Gloucester’s elder son)
Jonathan Wetherbee
EDMUND (Gloucester’s younger, illegitimate son)
Michael Riffle
EARL OF KENT
Zachary Kimball
FAO (for actor on stage)
Phil Dumouchel
OSWALD (Goneril’s servant)
Julian Vincent Klepper
CORNEL (Gloucester’s servant)
Cassie Dobbins
LEAR’S SERVANT
Nicholas Wrem

artist bios

Jessica Gaffney (Costumes) received her MFA in design from NYU’s Tisch School of the Arts. Off Broadway: No Child (dir. Hal Brooks; Epic Theatre Ensemble). Off Off-Broadway: The Internationale (dir. Ken Rus Schmoll; 11P/Fairfield Theatre Co.); Wit (dir. Kent Nicholson; SPF/The Beckett); Cramble (dir. Katie Pearl; Chubbled Thumb); Boggsck’s House of Baseball (dir. Mary Kate Burke; The Flea); Thirty Red Parties, Easterly, and First and Starts the Sacred Heart (Overlap Productions); Goats, Biting Pets, and The Party (dir. Mark Armstrong; The Production Co.). Jessica also designs costumes and scenery for film.

Thomas Dunn (Lighting) is pleased to have another opportunity to work at the U of R (he created the lighting design for last season’s Killer Joe and this season’s The Lower Depths). Thomas works primarily on the creation and development of new works in NYC and abroad. Recent company credits include works with Dramahaus, Human Future Dance Corps, Sens Productions, SPF, and Tinajel Harrell Dance Style.

Obadiah Eaves (Sound and Original Score) This marks Obadiah’s twelfth year designing for the University of Rochester. He recently designed sound for The Lieutenant of Inishmore and Shining City on Broadway, and has created sound and music for the world premieres of works by such playwrights as David Mamet, Woody Allen, Susan-Log Park, and Jon Robin Baitz. He won the 2005 Lowell Award for Outstanding Sound Design for his work on Nine Parts of Desire (Manhattan Ensemble Theater and national tour), and an Aidelco Viv Award for Flocking For (The Public). Other work includes Birds of a Feather (Second Stage), Moonlight and Magnolias (Manhattan Theatre Club), The Argument, Beautiful Child, Stopping Traffic (at Vineyard Theatre), Celebration and The Room, The Bald Soprano/ The Lesson (Atlantic), Hamlet, References to Salvador Dali Make Me Hot (The Public/NYSF), Pes (Playwrights Horizons) and Blues Clues Live (Radio City and tour). His music for television can be heard on HBO Family, Nickelodeon, Discovery, and The Learning Channel, and he has appeared as a session violinist and mandolinist in numerous film and television scores. His band, “Big Hair”, has released two nationally distributed CDs. Obadiah is a UR International Theatre Program Master Artist.

Ruth Childs (Voice and Acting Coaching) is a voice/dialect coach, director, and actor. She was born in Cornwall, England, but has lived and traveled all over Europe and the US. Ruth completed a BA in Theatre and German at Grinnell College in Iowa, and an MFA in Acting from the University of Minnesota in Minneapolis. She has worked at many theatres and universities, including The Guthrie Theatre, Geva Theatre Centre, SUNY Albany, and Grinnell College. Ruth is a certified teacher of Fitzmaurice Voice work. She is an Assistant Professor of Theatre at SUNY College at Brockport. Previous voice and acting coaching/teaching for the University of Rochester International Theatre Program includes Shaw’s Major Barbara, Dario Fo’s Accidental Death of an Anarchist, Gertrude Stein’s Doctor Faustus Lights the Lights and Maxim Gorki’s The Lower Depths.

background: drawing for shakespeare's family coat of arms
Shakespeare's *King Lear* is a play which deals explicitly with ideas of fate, divinity, and astrology. Shakespeare's was a time caught between two prevalent concepts of fate: that an individual's life was all but unaffected by fate, or that fate was so hopelessly complex as to be undetectable, though it still very much governed a person's life. Shakespeare takes the middle ground: his characters are subject to fate, but the fate that they must succumb to is of their own making.

The most skilled manipulator in the play and perhaps the only character to consider fate's inner workings, Edmund, fulfilling the role of the skeptic at the onset, prospers indeed, as if the gods truly intend to "stand up for bastards" (I, ii, 22). Working against the standards of his society, the "plague of custom," Edmund finds himself empowered—capable even of overthrowing his father the Earl. But it is not fate which gifts Edmund his position, nor which brings about the misfortunes of Lear, Edgar, or Gloucester, as Edmund well acknowledges; "when we are sick in fortune...we make guilty of our disasters the sun, the moon, and the stars, as if we were villains on necessity" (I, ii, 119-21). Edmund's usurpation, not only of his family, but of Fate itself, is due to his own invention. Shakespeare is not content, however, to allow a villain such free reign over his play, and we see Edmund himself succumb to the Fate he had purposed so cleverly to circumnavigate. This detail does not escape Edmund's attention. He responds to Edgar's assertion that "The gods are just and of our pleasant vices/Make instruments to plague us" with "Thou'st spoken right, 'tis true; / The wheel is come full circle, I am here" (V, iii, 168-72). It is interesting to note, then, that Edmund might have saved both the King and Cordelia had he, rather than bidding his brother "speak you on, / You look as you had something more to say," (V, ii, 199-200) chosen to send straight away to the prison. Whether this is meant to show Edmund playing his game one last time or simply to show that Fate can be a cruel mistress, only Shakespeare himself knows for certain.

The prime victims of Edmund's machinations, his own family, fall for disparate reasons. Edmund describes Edgar as "a brother noble, / Whose nature is so far from doing harms / That he suspects none" (I, ii, 177-179); Edgar has faith in the gods and trusts that they will protect the good and just. It is appropriate, then, that Edgar must assume a new identity—Edgar, like Lear and Gloucester, cannot survive in the godless world outside castle walls. But Edmund, however, is an entirely different creature, one which allows Edgar to preserve himself in the malevolent outdoors. And just as Fate returns to lower Edmund to his "proper" place, so it does to raise Edgar to his.

Gloucester, in opposition to his sons, feels himself from the start to be a pawn of the gods. Upon being told of Edgar's supposed disloyalty, Gloucester places the blame upon the sky, saying: "These late eclipses in the sun and moon portend no good to us....Lover cools, friendship falls off, brothers divide; in cities, mutinies; in countries, discord; in palaces, treason; and the bond cracked 'twixt son and father" (I, ii, 103-9). Gloucester's superstitious beliefs only assist Edmund in turning him against Edgar. Edmund uses them to incriminate his brother ("Here stood he in the dark, his sharp sword out,/ Mumbling of wicked charms, conjuring the moon," II, i, 38-40). It is only after his eyes are lost that Gloucester seeks to influence Fate through prayer: "O my follies! Then Edgar was abused? / Kind gods, forgive me that and prosper him," (III, vii, 90-1). He later expresses his new faith in Fate even more clearly, saying to Poor Tom: "That I am wretched/ Makes thee the happier. Heavens dea/she still" (IV, i, 68-9).

Each of the major characters in *King Lear*, as well as those in many of Shakespeare's other plays, find themselves the victims of Fate. *King Lear* plays with the idea on a scale unlike that of these other plays. Shakespeare does not seem to make a pronouncement on the laws of Fate, though, and despite character's varying amounts of belief in the inevitability of Fate, each finds himself subject to Fate's hand in a manner of their own making.
Many call it the greatest tragedy ever written, and although we just call it King Lear, there are two different and distinct texts on which modern editions of Shakespeare's play are based. The two versions are presumably closely derived from Shakespeare's original manuscript, which is now unfortunately lost, though no one can say for sure how close. The play was first published in 1608, in a small individual, or “quarto” version, titled *The True Chronicle of the History of the Life and Death of King Lear and His Three Daughters*. This version appeared at least two years after Shakespeare's original was performed. *The Tragedy of King Lear* appeared in 1623, included in the First Folio edition of the complete plays of Shakespeare. The differences between these two versions are significant. The quarto contains 285 lines not in the folio; the folio contains around 100 lines not in the quarto. Also, at least a thousand individual words are changed between the two texts, each text has a completely different style of punctuation, and about half the verse lines in the folio are either printed as prose or differently divided in the quarto. The changes affect characterization, structure, emphasis and the pacing of scenes, even though there are no radical alterations in the plot. Some scholars prefer the early quarto text, presuming that it is based more closely on Shakespeare’s written manuscript. However, the folio is more commonly used as a base for modern editions, since it is part of a volume whose publication was overseen by two former members of Shakespeare's acting company, who moreover claimed that their book corrected many prior corrupt or pirated versions of the plays. Yet the debate remains unsettled. It has even been claimed that the folio is a distinct revision of the quarto, that there are in fact two *King Lear*. As happens with most modern productions of *King Lear*, the Todd Theatre production has used parts of both versions, in order to create our own unique interpretation of the play.

**The Fool**

The court fool often caused laughter not merely through conscious jests, witty gossip, or knavish tricks, but by mental deficiencies or physical deformities. These deprived him of both rights and responsibilities, making him paradoxically at once an outlaw and a helpless dependent on his society. If the theatrical clown sometimes imitated the characteristics of such unfortunate souls, he was yet always a skilled actor, an “artificial” rather than a “natural” fool, to use a distinction proposed by Robert Armin, one of Shakespeare’s clowns.

Lear’s Fool has been regarded in many ways: as a clown, an idiot, a madman, an oracle, an ironical philosopher who tells the bitter truth, a proponent of learned ignorance, a whipping boy, and a good-natured saint. The Fool in this play serves as an intermediary between Lear’s silliness and madness. He is at once a sharp commentator on Lear’s condition and a vulnerability caught up in the tragic action. His business is to make clear, in this one peculiarly dreadful instance, the reversal of the position between wise man and fool. And yet he is no smug and facile satirist. His relentless, repeated jesting at the mad King’s expense, his tactless jokes and snatches of song, spring evidently from genuine grief.

Shakespeare could write *King Lear* because other men besides himself had thought poetically about kings and fools, but the fool in cap and bells (the “coxcomb”) survives in our imagination because Shakespeare numbered him among his *dramatis personae* and used him as a vehicle for his profoundest reflections on the nature of human pain and human beatitude.
At the center of Shakespeare’s *King Lear* is the image of an old man running about in a storm, screaming at the rain, at the gods of the weather. He asks them to punish his cruel daughters, and to punish him as well. Or is it the image of that same old man sheltering from the storm in a poor hovel, kept company by a fool, a madman, and a disguised and exiled councilor. Pressed on all sides, at risk of their lives from human as well as nature and ral violence, these refugees yet find time for curious bits of theater. Huddling in a house of straw, they conjure up tormented, hallucinatory images of the worlds they have lost. Lear even stages a mad trial for his daughters, conjuring up fantastic interrogations, seeking to know whether “there is any cause in nature that make these hard hearts.” Shakespeare never wrote a play with scenes of greater cruelty, cruelty that takes both sly and horribly blunt forms. *King Lear* also contains stranger, more uncanny acts of kindness than any other play, and acts of kindness and cruelty in troubling combination. This is a play beset by terrible doubts. It is a play about the un-mooring of things, persons, roles, about uncertain measures of loyalty and love. The idea of the human, as the idea of kingship, are set adrift in this play along with the human characters. “Nature” is invoked continually, but nature seems the source of what is unnatural as well as what is good or kind.

At the start of the play, King Lear seems to think he can control the world of loss and gain. He acts as if he can give away just as much kingdom and power as he wants to give away, and keep the rest—measuring his gifts by a perverse test of love. But in this attempt to combine coercion and generosity, he starts a process in which he loses more than he could ever imagine. He and the world around him is stripped down, deprived. The process catches up other—men, women who wander around in plain sight. States of absence, loss, and nakedness reveal things about the world. “Look with thine ears!”

Human speech itself is stripped down to its bones here, to blunt insults, ranging anger, senseless howling, nonsense, and noise. But it also reveals in this poverty moments of strange eloquence, as well as extravagant and wonderfully inventive play—in the jesting songs of a fool, the eerie cries and fragmentary tales of a madman, or the eloquent “nothing” of a betrayed daughter. States of absence, loss, and nakedness speak for more than one could ever think, they are generous; they produce weird riches of thought and action. “Nothing” takes on a strange, relentless substance in this play, by a kind of natural magic.

You should listen to how often the characters in this play can invoke the world of animals, how often they refer to, say, the mouse, hawk, horse, fox, hog, snake—and worm, the “tadpole,” “swimming frog” and “ditch-dog.” It is a way of speaking for what humans themselves both are and can become, and of what we make of them. And listen to how often people speak to the “gods,” invoking them as just, kind, vengeful, cruel, blind, mocking, playful, or silent. Such speech is no guarantee of divine presence. It only suggests just how much humans need to invoke such gods, trying thereby to clarify or rationalize or even disguise what it is they do, what they see in the world.

The character who calls himself “Mad Tom”—he is in fact the betrayed and disguised son of a nobleman—rants continually about the invisible demons who swarm around him. He names “the foul fiend Flibbertigibbet,” “Hobbididence,” “Obidicut,” “Smulkin,” and the like. It turns out that the true demons of the play are men and women who wander around in plain sight.

Alack, ‘tis he. Why he was met even now As mad as the vexed sea, singing aloud, Crowned with rank fumiter and furrow-weeds, With burdocks, hemlock, nettles, cuckoo-flowers, Darnel and all the idle weeds that grow In our sustaining corn.

When we are born we cry that we are come To this great stage of fools...

It is hard to know if Lear ever comes to his senses. Through the course of his madness, there are many moments when he seems to see the world plain, to acknowledge his former blindness and folly, his failure as a king and father. We as well must want him to see. But there is a relentlessness to his fantasy, his powers of denial, even when he is captured by his enemies and under threat of death—“let’s away to prison; / We two alone will sing like larks above the Ruiz / In our sustaining corn.”

When we are born we cry that we are come To this great stage of fools...